'Tis the Season

Feature   By Benjamin E. Sones

Are you ready for the holidays? With the help of your Palm device you can be. There are stockings-full of applications and doc files out there to help you fire up your holiday spirit; here are five that you won't want to miss.

Red Mercury LLC (*www.red-mercury.com*) has a two-part application to help you get into the holiday spirit. Xmas 2K 1.1 features a colorful timer that counts down the days, hours, and seconds left until Santa comes barreling down your chimney. The second part of the application is a game called the "Santa Menace." You get to help Santa by catching gifts as he drops them. The game timer starts at December 1st and slowly counts its way down to Christmas day; the closer you get, the faster the presents drop. Miss three and your game is over. Xmas 2K falls squarely into the "simple but cute" category. You can register the shareware version for $5.00 at Red Mercury's website.

Pine Tree Software (*www.pinetreesoftware.net*) has a handy little helper called Christmas Manager 1.5 that can help take the edge off Christmas shopping and preparations. It's a stand-alone database that lets you keep track of cards that you need to send, shopping that you need to do, Christmas web sites, and your own personal Christmas list. Version 1.5 is freeware, but currently seems to be unavailable on Pine Tree Software's site (you can still download it at either *www.palmgear.com*

Do you have your Christmas shopping done yet?

or *www.handango.com*). Pine Tree plans to roll out version 2.0 sometime soon—it will come with a few new features and a price tag of $4.50.
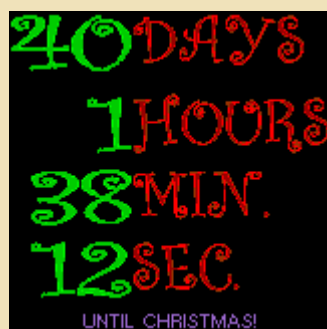
R Howe's (*agencydb.tripod.com/pg/palmgear.htm*) X-Mas List 1.1.0 is a similar, if somewhat more focused, application. This stand-alone database just tracks your Christmas shopping list, but it arranges it by person and allows you to budget your presents and check each person off the list as you purchase them. The application is "postcardware"—you don't have to pay for it, but the developer asks that you send him a post card or Christmas card if you use it. Sounds like a bargain.

Visionary 2000's (*visionary2000.com/pilot/index.htm*) Winter Holiday Readings is not an application per se, but a collection of holiday doc files specifically formatted for handheld reading. 70 carols, 35 recipes, 4 holiday stories, and Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (but no partridge in a pear tree).

Paul Ellams' (*www.ellams.force9.co.uk*) Santa 1.0 is another "Christmas Card Ware" title. This simple game puts you at the helm of Santa's sleigh; you'll have to navigate through a series of side-scrolling neighborhoods, delivering presents by dropping them down chimneys All right, perhaps that's not how Santa *really* works, but lighten up—it's just a game.

Review   **My Shopping Cart 1.0**   *$6.50, PalmSoftNet.,www.palmsoftnet.com*

PalmSoftNet's My Shopping Cart probably encompasses more than most people are looking for in terms of grocery or shopping list software. It's more than a jazzed-up To Do List—it's a full-fledged shopping database that allows you to create store profiles and track shopping expenses over time.

You start by creating lists of stores that you regularly shop at and items that you commonly purchase. This may be a bit more work than you are willing to dedicate to such an application right out of the gate, but the payoff is worthwhile. When you want to actually compile your shopping lists, you can select any previously entered item from a list—you will never need to write it out in Graffiti after the initial entry.

There are a few catches—you can only enter a maximum of 26 items in each list (although you can create an unlimited number of lists), and while you can enter prices for each item in your database, My Shopping Cart does not total your bill for you (you'll have to manually enter the total from your receipt). Still, for the price, it's a great shopping list utility.
—Benjamin E. Sones

News

Read, Set, Ads!

Internet advertising company DoubleClick announced that it plans to test the advertising waters with Vindigo and OmniSky, a publisher of handheld city guides a wireless access provider, respectively. DoubleClick plans to start market trials soon; if you were wondering who was going to foot the bill for all this handheld content, your answer has arrived: it's the advertisers.

Palm Plugs In

Palm Inc. wants to help you… if you are a developer, that is. Their new service, PluggedIn@Palm, is geared to help developers of software and hardware expansions for the Palm Pilot get their creations to market more quickly by assisting with development and distribution. Obviously Palm realizes that success hinges not only on the quality of the platform, but also on support.

Handspring's Critical Mass?

Handspring is going about as mass market as it can get—starting later this month the company will be selling its Visor handhelds and selected Springboard expansion modules in 500 Wal-Mart stores nationwide. For more information, visit *www.handspring.com.*

New Software

PalmPool 1.1

Those crazy folks at Enzyme Digital Marketing have put together one slick pool simulation. Control force and spin on a "true scale" table under the official rules for American billiards. All for $10.95.
www.enzyme.org

Filez 1.0

Need a comprehensive file manager for your Palm device? Check out nosleep software's Filez, which you can use to delete, beam, or modify any file on your Palm. It's free.
www.nosleep.net

SneakPics Color 1.0

Great for boring classes or meetings, Liquid Palm's SneakPics allows you to doodle and beam pictures from Palm to Palm via your IR port. The color version sells for $10.00.
www.liquidpalm.com